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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/725,765	11/30/2000	Toshiaki Okabe	108001	1657
25944	7590	09/05/2007		
OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC P.O. BOX 19928 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22320			EXAMINER SINGH, RACHNA	
			ART UNIT 2176	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 09/05/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 09/725,765
Filing Date: November 30, 2000
Appellant(s): OKABE ET AL.

MAILED

SEP 05 2007

Technology Center 2100

James A. Oliff
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 05/21/07 appealing from the Office action mailed 11/14/06.

(1) Real Party in Interest

A statement identifying by name the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) Status of Claims

The statement of the status of claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) Status of Amendments After Final

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is correct.

(7) Claims Appendix

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(8) Evidence Relied Upon

2003/0177111 A1	EGENDORF et al.	09-2003
5,946,689	YANAKA et al.	08-1999

6,728,947 B1

BENGSTON

04-2004

(9) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Egendorf et al., US 2003/0177111 A1, 9/18/03 (filed 1/21/03 (continuation of app filed 11/16/99) in view of Yanaka et al., US 5,946,689, 8/31/99 (filed 11/26/97), and further in view of Bengston, US 6,728,947 B1, 04/27/04 (filed 06/05/98).

In reference to claims 1, 8, and 13, Egendorf teaches a method for searching from a plurality of data sources. Egendorf's system comprises the following:

-A method for searching for information in a plurality of information sources connected to a network and specifically to searching databases on the Internet which meets the

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preamble, **a document integrated management apparatus which performs integrated management on plural documents stored in plural databases managed by controllers unique to the databases.** See page 1, paragraph [0001].

-A set of mechanisms that stores information that relates terms to searchbase categories. These linkages and rules, related sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Thus the mechanism manages linkage information among documents in plural databases. See page 6, paragraph [0075]. Egendorf teaches the concept of a searchbase that contains relationships between categories and information sources and the associated descriptive packets. The descriptive packets describe an information source that purports to contain information relevant to the category of that node. The descriptive packets include an identification of the information source and content information. See page 5, paragraph [0059] and pages 5-6, paragraph [0067]. These teachings meet the limitation, **a linkage information management unit that stores and manages linkage information among documents stored in the plural databases or document sets each having one or more documents as documents related to each other, the linkage information including at least one identifier of a document set.**

-A mechanism for creating and storing information about the relationships between different categories and information sources. See page 6, paragraphs [0075]. These

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linkages and rules, which relate sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary, are created by both a central authority and by the authors of the information sources. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. These teachings meet the limitation, **a document information management unit that stores and manages linkage information among documents stored in the plural databases or document sets each having one or more documents as documents related to each other, the documents being stored in the plural databases, the document information including at least one identifier of a document set.**

-Providing a plurality of packets wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources and includes an identification of the information source and content description which meets the limitation, **identifiers of document sets, wherein the linkage information and the document information are linked to each other when the identifier of document set included in the linkage information corresponds with the identifier of document set included in the document information.** See page 20, claim 11, page 5, paragraph [0059], pages 5-6, paragraph [0067] and figure 2B.

EXAMINER NOTE: Egendorf teaches the concept of a searchbase that contains relationships between categories and information sources and the associated descriptive packets. The descriptive packets describe an information source that purports to contain information relevant to the category of that node. The descriptive packets include an identification of the information source and content information. See page 5, paragraph [0059] and pages 5-6, paragraph [0067]. Furthermore, the

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searchbase can comprise a plurality of descriptive packets, wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources. Thus the linkage information and document information are linked to each other using identifiers. The claimed "identifier of the document sets" are taught by Egendorf by his searchbase comprising packets that identify linkage information and document information in that the packets contain information sources that have information relevant to the category of the node. Thus the "packets" serve the same purpose of the claimed invention's identifiers in that the packets do serve as an identifier of information sources related to a given document set or "searchbase".

Egendorf does not disclose or suggest document information includes ***a history identifier identifying an original and update or revision of a document or document set or the linkage information includes links to an updated or revised document or document set based on the history identifier***, however, Yanaka discloses a method of detecting data updates involved in the replication of database data. Yanaka discloses that when data is updated, an update serial number is produced for the data. The update serial number includes a system identifier for identifying a database system in which the data is updated and is stored in the update serial number history associated with the data each time the data is updated. The update serial number history corresponds to the received data in the database and is used as an identifier for acquiring reference related data. See abstract and columns 2-6. Yanaka further discloses comparing the content of the update serial number history with the received data and determining if the received data differs from the data in the database. In comparing the content of the update serial number history with the received data to determine if the received data differs from the data in the database,

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Yanaka is determining whether the update or revised document has been approved or not since the comparing entails determining if there is data in the revised document that has not been implemented into the current document. The updated data identifier points to the updated data each time the data is updated to form a new data identifier. These teachings meet the limitation, ***wherein the document information includes a history identifier identifying an original and update or revision of a document or document set and the linkage information includes links to the original and the updated or revised document or document set based on the history identifier.***

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate Yanaka's history identifier in the system of Egendorf as it was desirable at the time of the invention to display any updates of data in one database to another so as to ensure that the latest contents were provided to all databases. See column 1, lines 1-60 of Yanaka. Furthermore, providing a history identifier of the document would ensure the document set was up to date and contained the most recent revisions of documents as opposed to an outdated document. See column 1 of Yanaka.

Neither Egendorf nor Yanaka teach that the documents support one or more of a plurality of process nor do they teach a status identifier identifying a process step within on of the plurality of processes.

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However, Bengston teaches a workflow distributing apparatus and method that executes process steps. Bengston discloses process data files (i.e. documents) containing data to be used and/or transformed by the processes. See column 5, lines 5-18. Bengston's workflow data transferred by the processing device includes a workflow file and a process data file. The workflow file contains an indication of the sequence of process steps to be executed as well as data specifying the location of process data files and status information which meets the limitation ***documents related to each other by supporting one or more of a plurality of processes***. Further, Bengston teaches providing status information to indicate the progress of the workflow process steps which meets the limitation of ***a status identifier identifying a process step within one of the plurality of processes***. See column 5, lines 29-40.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Bengston's workflow process steps specifying related process data files (i.e. documents) and providing status information indicating the progress of the sequence of process steps with Egendorf's document integrated management apparatus because it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide all documents needed for a process step in a workflow system in order to allow publishers, users, designers, and other human operators in an organization to execute their assigned process electronically so as to reduce the costs involved in executing workflow steps manually. See column 1, lines 10-54 of Bengston. Furthermore, it was desirable at the

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time of the invention to provide status information in order to notify users of the progression of the sequence of process steps. See column 5, lines 29-40 of Bengston.

In reference to claim 2, Egendorf discloses a method for searching for information from a plurality of data sources. Egendorf's system teaches receiving a search request from a user to retrieve information from a plurality of information sources in accordance with the given search criteria. Egendorf further teaches searching the searchbase with the inquiry to identify any of the plurality of information sources that meet the criteria. See page 20, first column.

In reference to claim 3, Egendorf discloses a set of mechanisms that store information that relates terms to searchbase categories. These linkages and rules relate sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Thus the mechanism manages linkage information among documents in plural databases. See page 6, paragraph [0075]. Egendorf further teaches providing a plurality of packets wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources and includes an identification of the information source and content description. See page 20, claim 11. It is inherent in Egendorf's system that the process of identifying an information source using identification is used as a means to target a database from the plurality of databases. Moreover, the identifier is used to identify the database and provide information from the source.

In reference to claim 4, Egendorf discloses a set of mechanisms that store information that relates terms to searchbase categories. These linkages and rules relate sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Thus the mechanism manages linkage information among documents in plural databases. See page 6, paragraph [0075]. Egendorf further teaches providing a plurality of packets wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources and includes an identification of the information source and content description. See page 20, claim 11. It is inherent in Egendorf's system that the process of identifying an information source using identification is used as a means to target a database from the plurality of databases. Moreover, the identifier is used to identify the database and provide information from the source.

In reference to claim 5, Egendorf teaches a hierarchical network in which each category element of the network facilitates associations with the element to information source associations. Specifically, Egendorf discloses that the network includes cross-reference and link elements. See page 5, paragraphs [0060]-[0066]. Thus in presenting a hierarchical representation between the linkages, Egendorf teaches a system in which the target document in a search may be a leaf document or an entire set. See page 5, paragraphs [0060]-[0066].

In reference to claim 7, Egendorf teaches that the search request is transformed into queries for the identified information sources, wherein each query is in accordance with the query language and template in the information source. See page 8, paragraph [0101].

In reference to claim 9 and 14, Egendorf teaches a method for searching from a plurality of data sources. Egendorf's system comprises the following:

-A method for searching for information in a plurality of information sources connected to a network and specifically to searching databases on the Internet. See page 1, paragraph [0001]. A set of mechanisms that stores information that relates terms to searchbase categories. These linkages and rules, related sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Thus the mechanism manages linkage information among documents in plural databases. See page 6, paragraph [0075]. Providing a plurality of packets wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources and includes an identification of the information source and content description. See page 20, claim 11. These teachings meet the limitation, ***selecting a document set identifier by searching for document information on document sets having one or more documents as related documents, the documents being stored in the plural databases, based on designation of document or document set or search data inputted in a common***

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format from a client system, the document information including document set identifiers;

-A mechanism for creating and storing information about the relationships between different categories and information sources. See page 6, paragraphs [0075]. These linkages and rules relate sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059].

Egendorf discloses a method for searching for information from a plurality of data sources. Egendorf's system teaches receiving a search request from a user to retrieve information from a plurality of information sources in accordance with the given search criteria. Egendorf further teaches searching the searchbase with the inquiry to identify any of the plurality of information sources that meet the criteria. See page 20, first column. These teachings meet the limitation, ***selecting an access target database. . .corresponding to the selected document set identifier, wherein the linkage information includes document set identifiers***. Egendorf teaches the concept of a searchbase that contains relationships between categories and information sources and the associated descriptive packets. The descriptive packets describe an information source that purports to contain information relevant to the category of that node. The descriptive packets include an identification of the information source and content information. See page 5, paragraph [0059] and pages 5-6, paragraph [0067].

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Furthermore, the searchbase can comprise a plurality of descriptive packets, wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources. Thus the linkage information and document information are linked to each other using identifiers. The claimed "identifier of the document sets" are taught by Egendorf by his searchbase comprising packets that identify linkage information and document information in that the packets contain information sources that have information relevant to the category of the node. Thus the "packets" serve the same purpose of the claimed invention's identifiers in that the packets do serve as an identifier of information sources related to a given document set or "searchbase".

Egendorf does not disclose or suggest document information includes ***a history identifier identifying an original and update or revision of a document or document set*** or that ***the linkage information includes an updated or revised document or document set based on the history identifier***. Yanaka discloses a method of detecting data updates involved in the replication of database data. Yanaka discloses that when data is updated, an update serial number is produced for the data. The update serial number includes a system identifier for identifying a database system in which the data is updated and is stored in the update serial number history associated with the data each time the data is updated. The update serial number history corresponds to the received data in the database and is used as an identifier for acquiring reference related data. See abstract and columns 2-6. Yanaka further discloses comparing the content of the update serial number history with the received

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data and determining if the received data differs from the data in the database. The updated data identifier points to the updated data each time the data is updated to form a new data identifier. These teachings meet the limitation ***wherein the document information includes a history identifier identifying an original and update or revision of a document or document set*** and ***"and the linkage information includes links to the original and the updated or revised document or document set based on the history identifier.***

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate Yanaka's history identifier and status identifier in the system of Egendorf as it was desirable at the time of the invention to display any updates of data in one database to another so as to ensure that the latest contents were provided to all databases. See column 1, lines 1-60 of Yanaka. Furthermore, providing a history identifier and status of the document would ensure the document set is up to date and contains the most recent revisions of documents as opposed to an outdated document. See column 1 of Yanaka.

Neither Egendorf nor Yanaka teach that the documents support one or more of a plurality of process nor do they teach a status identifier identifying a process step within on of the plurality of processes. However, Bengston teaches a workflow distributing apparatus and method that executes process steps. Bengston discloses process data files (i.e. documents) containing data to be used and/or transformed by the processes. See column 5, lines 5-18. Bengston's workflow data transferred by the processing

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device includes a workflow file and a process data file. The workflow file contains an indication of the sequence of process steps to be executed as well as data specifying the location of process data files and status information which meets the limitation ***documents related to each other by supporting one or more of a plurality of processes***. Further, Bengston teaches providing status information to indicate the progress of the workflow process steps which meets the limitation of ***a status identifier identifying a process step within one of the plurality of processes***. See column 5, lines 29-40.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Bengston's workflow process steps specifying related process data files (i.e. documents) and providing status information indicating the progress of the sequence of process steps with Egendorf's document integrated management apparatus because it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide all documents needed for a process step in a workflow system in order to allow publishers, users, designers, and other human operators in an organization to execute their assigned process electronically so as to reduce the costs involved in executing workflow steps manually. See column 1, lines 10-54 of Bengston. Furthermore, it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide status information in order to notify users of the progression of the sequence of process steps. See column 5, lines 29-40 of Bengston.

In reference to claim 10, Egendorf discloses a set of mechanisms that store information that relates terms to searchbase categories. These linkages and rules, relate sets of searchbase nodes, thereby creating a concept dictionary. A searchbase contains relationships between categories and information sources. See page 5, paragraph [0059]. Thus the mechanism manages linkage information among documents in plural databases. See page 6, paragraph [0075]. Egendorf further teaches providing a plurality of packets wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources and includes an identification of the information source and content description. See page 20, claim 11. It is inherent in Egendorf's system that the process of identifying an information source using identification is used as a means to target a database from the plurality of databases. Moreover, the identifier is used to identify the database and provide information from the source.

In reference to claim 11, Egendorf teaches a hierarchical network in which each category element of the network facilitates associations with the element to information source associations. Specifically, Egendorf discloses that the network includes cross-reference and link elements. See column 5, paragraphs [0060]-[0066]. Thus in presenting a hierarchical representation between the linkages, Egendorf teaches a system in which the target document in a search may be a leaf document or an entire set. See column 5, paragraphs [0060]-[0066].

In reference to claim 12, Egendorf teaches that the search request is transformed into queries for the identified information sources, wherein each query is in accordance with the query language and template in the for the information source. See page 8, paragraph [0101].

(10) Response to Argument

Appellant argues claims 1-5 and 7-14 would not have been obvious over Egendorf in view of Yanaka and Bengston. On pages 14-16, Appellant argues the combination does not teach the “history identifier” or “linkage information” features recited in the claims. Appellant argues the reliance on Yanaka to teach these features are based on an incorrect interpretation of Yanaka. Appellant argues that while Yanaka discloses a set of data including a data identifier and **a history identifier that points to an update serial number history**, Yanaka does not teach a history identifier identifying an original and update/revision of a document or document set. Appellant states that Yanaka uses the update serial number history to support a replication decision in which a data server decides whether it should update a set of data. Appellant states a history table merely allows the receiving database to determine whether the dataset is more recent than the data stored in a database. (See page 15 of the Brief).

Examiner respectfully disagrees with Appellant’s assertions. Yanaka discloses a history identifier for pointing to a storing position on the database of an associated update serial number history for holding the history of an associated update serial

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number which meets the limitation **a history identifier**. See column 4, lines 1-51 and figure 2. Yanaka discloses that when data is updated, an update serial number is produced for the data. The update serial number includes a system identifier for identifying a database system in which the data is updated and is stored in the update serial number history associated with the data each time the data is updated. The update serial number history corresponds to the received data in the database and is used as an identifier for acquiring reference related data. See abstract and columns 2-6. Yanaka further discloses comparing the content of the update serial number history with the received data and determining if the received data differs from the data in the database. In comparing the content of the update serial number history with the received data to determine if the received data differs from the data in the database, Yanaka is determining whether the update or revised document has been approved or not since the comparing entails determining if there is data in the revised document that has not been implemented into the current document. The updated data identifier points to the updated data each time the data is updated to form a new data identifier. This meets the limitation, **wherein the document information includes a history identifier identifying an original and update or revision of a document or document set and the linkage information includes links to the original and the updated or revised document or document set based on the history identifier**.

In order to determine whether an update for a document exists in a database, it is necessary that a link or association between the original and updated/revised document be maintained because without a link or association, Yanaka's system would not know if

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updated data exists for the document. The history identifier points (i.e. links) to a storing position on the database of an associated update serial number history for holding the history of an associated update serial number. See column 4.

On the bottom of page 15, Appellant states Yanaka does not teach storing original as well as updates/revisions of a document or document set. It is respectfully noted, that the claim does not recite "storing original as well as updates/revisions of a document or document set". All the claim requires is that the linkage information include links to the original and the update or revised document or document set. Providing links to the documents is different from storing the documents. However, even if it is assumed the claim does require storing of the original and update/revision of a document, Yanaka teaches storing documents and updates of documents in a database. See columns 5-6 where Yanaka states an update serial number history associated with data may be acquired from a history identifier. The updated serial number histories associated with the data are maintained in databases. Where each time the data is updated, the update serial number associated with the data is stored. See claim 1 of Yanaka which outlines these features.

On pages 16-17, Applicant argues the office action ignores features recited in the claims such as a system with linkage information including links to original and update/revised document or documents sets based on a history identifier and based on a status identifier that identifies a process step with one of the plurality of processes. Examiner respectfully disagrees. The limitation reciting *linkage information including links to original and update/revised document or documents sets based on a history*

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identifier has been addressed in the comments above. Regarding the limitations citing a status identifier, neither Egendorf nor Yanaka teach that the documents support one or more of a plurality of process nor do they teach a status identifier identifying a process step within one of the plurality of processes. However, Bengston teaches a workflow distributing apparatus and method that executes process steps. Bengston discloses process data files (i.e. documents) containing data to be used and/or transformed by the processes. See column 5, lines 5-18. Bengston's workflow data transferred by the processing device includes a workflow file and a process data file. The workflow file contains an indication of the sequence of process steps to be executed as well as data specifying the location of process data files and status information which meets the limitation ***documents related to each other by supporting one or more of a plurality of processes***. Further, Bengston teaches providing status information to indicate the progress of the workflow process steps which meets the limitation of ***a status identifier identifying a process step within one of the plurality of processes***. See column 5, lines 29-40. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Bengston's workflow process steps specifying related process data files (i.e. documents) and providing status information indicating the progress of the sequence of process steps with Egendorf's document integrated management apparatus because it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide all documents needed for a process step in a workflow system in order to allow publishers, users, designers, and other human operators in an organization to execute their assigned process electronically so as to

reduce the costs involved in executing workflow steps manually. See column 1, lines 10-54 of Bengston. Furthermore, it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide status information in order to notify users of the progression of the sequence of process steps. See column 5, lines 29-40 of Bengston.

With respect to the arguments on pages 16-17, it is noted that Appellant's arguments fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.111(b) because they amount to a general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references.

On pages 17-18, Appellant argues there is not motivation to combine the cited references. Examiner stated it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate Yanaka's history identifier in the system of Egendorf as it was desirable at the time of the invention to display any updates of data in one database to another so as to ensure that the latest contents were provided to all databases. See column 1, lines 1-60 of Yanaka. Furthermore, providing a history identifier of the document would ensure the document set was up to date and contained the most recent revisions of documents as opposed to an outdated document. See column 1 of Yanaka. Appellant argues Egendorf allows information to be located in different databases, thus there is no benefit to display updates of data in one database to another to ensure the contents were provided to all databases. Yanaka teaches that there was a need in the art at the time of the invention to provide update information in a database system so that a user could detect the presence or absence of contention and enable updated data to be recognized. Certainly, this

feature would be beneficial in a system such as Egendorf in order to indicate that updates exist for a document in a database. See column 1 of Yanaka.

On pages 18-19, Appellant argues Bengston fails to overcome the deficiencies of Yanaka and Egendorf. Appellant states the combination fails to teach linkage information that links to original and update document based on a history identifier and a status identifier. These arguments have been addressed in the comments above and are referred to again in reference to Appellant's remarks on pages 18-19. Furthermore, In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, Bengston teaches it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide documents in a workflow system to allow publishers, users, designers, and other human operators in an organization to execute their assigned process electronically so as to reduce the costs involved in executing workflow steps manually. See column 1, lines 10-54 of Bengston. Furthermore, it was desirable at the time of the invention to provide a status information in order to notify users of the progression of the sequence of process steps. See column 5, lines 29-40 of Bengston.

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In view of the comments above, the rejections are maintained.

(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner's answer.

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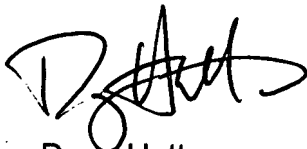
For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,



Rachna Singh

Conferees:



Doug Hutton
SPE, Art Unit 2176

William Bashore
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2176


WILLIAM BASHORE
PRIMARY EXAMINER